

Steering Committee Notes
November 02, 2005

Meeting was called to order with introduction by Co-chair Mike Murray

Self-introductions were made by members in attendance

Co-chair Mike Murray informed the group that many community and working group meetings have been conducted since the last steering group meeting in June.

Power Point presentation entitled "Faces of Homelessness" given by Corinne Schneider, Department of Health and Human Services
(Power Point now available on-line)

Panel Discussion led by Susan Price, Coordinator, City of Long Beach Homeless Services. Panel was comprised of formerly homeless and currently homeless individuals.

Robert – Formerly homeless single father

Maria – Single mother was homeless for 18 months

Jenny – Formerly Homeless Single mother

Paul – Single and currently homeless for the previous 4 years

The Panel discussed their personal reasons for becoming homeless and services that were useful while homeless. They were able to show very different sides of the homeless experience.

Questions were then directed towards the panel participants.

Mike asked Paul about his comfort level on the streets and how the steering can have an impact on him?

Paul responded that he is not sure why he is comfortable on the streets, but he does not like change and never has. He is scared to look for work because not many places will hire someone his age... He would also need to earn \$20.00 or more per hour just to survive and that scares him. He has done drugs while on the streets; he didn't until he was on the street now he fights it every day. Also, he now has a purpose... He tries to help anyone he can. Although he continues to think about a place to live every day he is homeless.

Annette asked Paul about his earnings and asked what keeps him from getting housing?

Paul responded that he earns \$200 - \$300 a week through canning. Prior to becoming homeless he earned \$30k/year He had to file for bankruptcy in 1996. It would take a lot to get housing. "Why put myself in that environment when I may end up back on the streets."

Tom asked Paul about his drug use. He asked if he had used drugs in the last 30 days.

Paul responded yes

Tom stated that he knows that there is fear... But can tell that Paul is an intelligent man, maybe to smart for his own good.

Paul responded that his drug use stems from boredom and asked why a person chooses to self-destruct the way he does.

Chris S. asked panel why there been an increase in the homeless population on the river?

Panel responded that the river is not easily accessed by the Police

Joe Colletti presented an overview and handout on the suggestions that have come out of the community meetings in each district.

Open Discussion Session

Harry Saltzgaver – stated that Robert had a motivation to change his life, his daughters. Paul did not have that motivation. When doing drugs and alcohol it is easy to fall into "why change". What is a motivation for change?

Chris Shippey – stated that the situation reminds her of an issue that the city faces. The clean up of the river is something that the city, CalTrans and county must collaborate on. The CalTrans rep. informed the city that the homeless are immediately removed from their property when discovered, while the county gives two weeks notice to vacate. The immediate notification seems to be motivation for change.

Toby Rothschild – stated that most homeless have motivation for change but some are afraid. Even if everyone wanted off the streets there are not enough places. First we need to have enough affordable housing.

Jack Smith – Stated that he objects to hearing at higher levels "he wants to be homeless" then we dismiss it and move on. The number of homeless people that want help far outweighs the number that want to stay homeless.

Harry Saltzgaver – stated the motive issue isn't "you've got no motive let find one". What will it take to get people over the hill? We need to motivate to get individuals to want to do better and give them the tools to do so.

Arlene Mercer – stated there needs to be a feeling of self worth. Paul lost his self worth over the years. A purpose is needed.

Closing remarks were given by Corinne Schneider

- 7 of 9 community focus groups have met
- Sub committee chairs have met
- Copies of materials and handouts are available on the web
- Sub committees will have outcomes within 6 months
- Steering committee will be asked to be involved in sharing info with new stakeholders

Mike Murray then thanked everyone for attending and ended the meeting.